

Saunders



## UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

HONOLULU 14, HAWAII

Department of Bacteriology

February 27, 1959

Dear Josh:

Your letter of the 25th arrived this noon. This is better service than we used to get in Madison when it often took a day or more for mail to travel from Bacteriology to Genetics.

Thank you very much for the suggestion that I do some work on airborne bacteria at various altitudes on the Island of Hawaii. Marion and I plan to spend a few days there during the week of March 23-28. Whether or not I can get needed equipment, and put it in working order before that time remains to be seen. The greatest difficulty is that I'm already up to my ears on another rather continuous medium out here - the sea.

The Chairman of this Department, Dr. George W. Chu, is a Johns Hopkins parasitologist and bacteriologist who is interested in dermatitis caused by schistosome cercariae, by various hydroids, and by certain algae. Soon after my arrival, I started work with Dr. Chu on a blue-green alga, Lyngbya majuscula, which grows attached to rocks in the shallow waters of beaches, and which is accused of causing a rather severe dermatitis. It is not known whether the alga itself causes the trouble, or whether the dermatitis-causing substances are produced by associated action of the alga with one or more species of bacteria. The job which I have undertaken is to: (1) cultivate the alga in the laboratory; (2) free it from bacterial associates or contaminants by methods used first by Hoover and others, but improved by Skoog and Gerloff; (3) isolate and identify the "typical" bacterial associates or contaminants of the alga. In a laboratory where one does all of his own work, this is keeping me busy. You see, I am also teaching the beginning course in bacteriology, running a seminar, giving special lectures, and serving as a sort of combined adviser and catalyst to get more work done in bacteriology. The main difficulty is that I am far enough from home to be classified as an "expert".

As a matter of fact, I'm enjoying immensely this opportunity to do some laboratory work, and want very much to make a go of it. Having started this rather ambitious program, I'd better stick with it and not diversify to the extent that nothing will get done.

Last October I started some work at Wisconsin with Dr. H. W. Jannasch of the Ploen, Germany Limnological Institute on associations of fresh-water blue-green algae with denitrifying bacteria. He is continuing his work as a Project Associate at Madison while I'm over here. I hope to resume work with him in Madison in July. So you see that this local study is tied in with my major research interest of the moment at home.

Saunders, W.



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At the same time, I welcome your suggestions, and I'm flattered that you thought I might be able to do something of this sort. I shall certainly give it a try, but my efforts may be puny and not very extensive.

We have just finished the round of ceremonies and festivities involved in the inauguration of Laurence H. Snyder as President of this university. I served as the delegate of the University of Wisconsin, and hence participated in the whole show. This was a bit strenuous. I'm glad it's done so everyone can go back to work. Two inaugurations in less than six months is more than enough.

Marion and I are comfortably situated in a small apartment about a mile up the valley from the campus. We have rented a little Volkswagen from a psychologist who is on leave at Rutgers for this semester. This gives us a chance to buzz around, see the sights, and collect samples. Everyone here is most hospitable, and the weather is truly wonderful. By the way, do you know what they do with old Volkswagens? They send them to an old-volks home!

Enough of that. This place has the reputation of being a hula university that is run as a Waikiki Beach sideshow. It isn't quite that bad, but they've got serious problems. The main one is to get good students to do research, and to find the funds to support research. Past administrations have concentrated on instructional work to the virtual exclusion of research. As a consequence the program of graduate studies is weak, and one has to fight for research space, equipment and support. It reminds me of Kansas State College when I had my first job there in 1927. But if Hawaii is to become a state it needs a strong university, and I shall be happy if I can help achieve that goal.

I had the pleasure of seeing Newton Morton and his wife a few days after our arrival on February 1st. On the 16th I served as the chairman of a panel on genetics in which Newt gave by far the best presentation. He's wonderful, and I hope we can keep him at Wisconsin.

Please give my best regards to Esther. We probably won't get up to see you on the way home because we are going via ship to Los Angeles, and from there to Madison by train. We expect to leave here on June 17th.

Thanks again for writing, and I hope your work is going well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

William B. Sarles